LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Information Bulletin

Vol. 67, No. 5 May 2008

A New Experience at Your Fingertips

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JAMES H. BILLINGTON
Librarian of Congress

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On the Cover: As part of the privately-funded educational campaign for the new Library of Congress Experience, images of historical figures composed entirely of fingerprints compel potential visitors to explore, discover and be inspired. Here, Thomas Jefferson embodies "imagination at your fingertips."

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Michaela McNichol

Opening the bronze doors to the Great Hall are, from left, "Benjamin Franklin," Marjorie Billington, Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., Rep. Adrian Smith, R-Neb., Librarian of Congress James Billington, Chief Operating Officer Jo Ann Jenkins and "Thomas Jefferson."

Library of Congress

Experience Debuts

The Library of Congress–the largest library in the world and the oldest U.S. federal cultural institution—recently launched the "Library of Congress Experience," offering visitors unique historical and cultural treasures brought to life through cutting-edge interactive technology and a companion Web site. A public celebration on April 12 marked the occasion.

Digital photographs that can be manipulated at these kiosks magnify architectural details, such as the Great Hall's marble floor embedded with bronze signs of the zodiac.

The Experience comprises a series of new, ongoing exhibitions, dozens of interactive kiosks, an inspiring multimedia presentation on the collections and programs of the Library, and a continuing online educational experience at the Web site myLOC.gov. All exhibits are free and open to the public.

"This has been years in the making, and represents fine work by scores of staff and some amazing generosity from our donors, especially the James Madison Council," said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. "It's truly a time for celebration. We are making our treasures more accessible to everyone than ever before."

The Librarian has led a 20-year effort to harness digital technology and the Internet to make the content of the Library available to users around the world. With his leadership and fundraising efforts during that period, the Library has received nearly half a billion dollars in outright gifts, pledges and in-kind contributions. Without these gifts from generous donors, the Library could not have created the new Experience or accomplished many other digital initiatives.

Inspired by the Librarian's leadership and vision and guided by Chief Operating Officer Jo Ann Jenkins, talented staff members throughout the Library collaborated over thousands of hours to create the Library of Congress Experience to make the Library's historic collections more readily accessible to millions of expected new visitors. Library visitorship is expected to rise substantially with the completion of the Capitol Visitors Center and opening of a tunnel linking the center to the Thomas Jefferson Building. ◆

Visitors Soak Up New Library Experience

By GAIL FINEBERG

People by the thousands, many of them first-time visitors, came to experience their national Library on Saturday, April 12.

"Ooooh," they said, and "Aaahhh," as they stepped through the great bronze doors into the marble splendor of the Great Hall. They watched, mesmerized, as the Library's story unfolded on huge video screens flanking the entryway.

Allowed into the Main Reading Room, visitors crooked their necks to peer up at the rotunda ceiling painting of Human Understanding floating 160 feet above the Main Reading Room desk. They posed for pictures high on the center desk.

In the exhibitions, visitors experimented with new digital technologies to explore old treasures that tell the country's creation story, from before the time of Columbus through the 19th century. At a mezzanine kiosk, they examined architectural details in blowups of gorgeous digital photographs provided by photographer Carol M. Highsmith. *(See Information Bulletin, December 2007.)*

"The technology is really cool. The quality of the images is pretty phenomenal. I don't know a lot of libraries that have this kind of technology," said Julie Webb, visiting with her two daughters from Carmel, Ind.

Many were moved by the experience. One giant of a man, middle-aged, stood leaning against a marble pillar at the side of the great Hall, absorbing the soaring white marble staircases and columns, the intricate carvings and colorful paintings, all bathed in light. Tears coursed down his cheeks. "I can't believe that all this is the work of man," he told a docent.

Michaela McNichol

Visitors are entertained outside the Jefferson Building prior to the opening of the Library of Congress Experience.

Welcoming the visitors to "the world's greatest storehouse of knowledge," Librarian of Congress James H. Billington said: "This is all here for you, and it's free."

In his opening remarks from a sheltered stage on the plaza of the Thomas Jefferson Building, the Librarian said he hoped visitors would remember April 12 as "a great day of fun, celebration and discovery."

"For this is genuinely the start of something big," he said, explaining that the Library and its collections were available not just to those who came in person to see them but also "to everyone in the world," who from their computers would be able to "turn pages" of the Gutenberg Bible or examine Ben Franklin's edits of the Declaration of Independence by way of a new Web presentation, **myLOC.gov**, a portal to the Library of Congress Experience.

"Dr. Billington's vision of creating a digital Alexandria ... has come to fruition," said Mickey Hart, a member of the American Folklife Center Board of Trustees and the National Recording Preservation Board and former percussionist with the Grateful Dead, who opened an afternoon ceremony to present eight Living Legend awards. *(See story on page 74.)*

Barry Wheeler

This bird's-eye view of the Main Reading Room in the Jefferson Building shows visitors gathered around the central desk on opening day of the Library of Congress Experience.

Speakers throughout the day noted the relationship of the Library to the institution housed in the Capitol across the street. In one of its first official acts, Congress passed legislation in 1800 to establish and finance its own Library of Congress. Congress replaced its library after two fires — one set by the British in 1814 during their wartime invasion of Washington and another started by a faulty chimney flue in 1851 — and sustained and supported it every year thereafter. As Billington has noted often, the U.S. Congress has been "the greatest patron of the greatest library anywhere in the world."

Two members of Congress were on hand with their families — Reps. Adrian Smith, R-Neb., and Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif. "This really is the nation's treasure," McCarthy said at the beginning of the morning program. "You are going to walk through doors that are being reopened for the first time since 1990. You are going to see two great Bibles, one that replaced the oral tradition and the other that represents the printed tradition. You are going to see Thomas Jefferson's library for the first time since it has been reconstituted."

A Most Avid Young Reader

By GAIL FINEBERG

Jacob Porter, 9, of Los Gatos, Calif., had waited all week to visit the Library. "I love books," he explained simply.

Jacob's mom and dad, Robin and Mark Porter, read stories to him when he was a baby, and as soon as he could learn to read himself he began devouring books. Jacob is happy to go to bed at 8 o'clock every night because he is permitted to read until 8:30. (Past that time, he keeps on reading with a flashlight beneath the covers.)

Because he runs out of things to read, Jacob haunts his local library. A librarian there told him he ought to see the Library of Congress, "which has every book in the world—well, every copyrighted book," Jacob said.

Barry Wheeler

Jacob Porter, 9, of Los Gatos, Calif., gets a lesson from musician Mickey Hart about the edited rough draft of the Declaration of Independence. By the time he left the Library, Jacob possessed three copies of the Declaration.

When his parents started planning their spring trip to Washington, they sat down with Jacob and a list of popular places to visit—the White House, the Capitol, the monuments, and the Air and Space museum. "What do you want to see?" they asked.

"The Library of Congress," he said.

"It wasn't on our list," his mother said. "But it's all he wanted to see."

The Porters arrived on Tuesday, April 8, and came straight to the Library. But the Thomas Jefferson Building was closed to prepare the space for the Saturday opening of the Library of Congress Experience. Jacob was devastated.

He tried to get a reader registration card at the Library, only to learn he had to be 16 to use any reading room.

"He had a meltdown," his mother said. "It was beginning to ruin our vacation. So we suggested he protest." Jacob marched into the Hill office of his senator, Barbara Boxer, and made his complaint to an aide. Then he persuaded his family to delay their return flight to California until the evening of April 12 so he could attend the grand opening of the Library of Congress Experience.

Jacob and his family were among the first ones through the bronze doors. He met the Librarian. He watched the orientation films and walked around the great spaces and fiddled with the electronic interpretive stations in the exhibitions. He bought copies of the Declaration and Constitution in the Sales Shop.

But he was disappointed. "That little boy in the film said, 'This is our library.' Well, it's not my library. Where are the books? I haven't seen any books. And I can't use it 'til I'm 16," he said.

Ford Peatross, the Library's curator of architecture, listened to his story. Impressed by Jacob's love of books and determination, Peatross found Tori Hill, head of the Main Reading Room, to ask her a huge favor—to let Jacob into the stacks, just for a moment, to see the books.

"Jacob, are you becoming more trouble than you're worth?" Hill quipped, picking him up and parking him on a Main Reading Room railing for a nose-to-nose talk. Jacob grinned.

Hill hugged him and led the way behind closed doors. "These shelves hold the building up," she said. "There are seven floors of stacks just like these, and they fill the core of the Thomas Jefferson Building." She explained how the old book conveyor system used to work, and the tour was over.

"How can I use the books?" he asked.

"Well, you can't use them by yourself until you're 16," Hill responded. "But you can request books by interlibrary loan. And you can come with your mom, who can order books for you to read here, with her."

Jacob wrapped his arms around her, and then around Peatross. "Thank you," he said. He was smiling broadly as he waved goodbye. ◆

Gail Fineberg is the editor of The Gazette, the Library's staff newsletter.

Using new technology, he continued, "We can apply the treasures of the past to the future. We're going to open up the Library to the world."

Upon receiving a Living Legend Award, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough said: "I saw yesterday an exhibition, which every American ought to see, 'Creating the United States.' If visitors to this, our capital city, whether they're from our own country or from abroad, were to see only one exhibition, one building, one place during their visit, 'Creating the United States' would be the one to see, here at the Library of Congress."

"The power of this institution is not just in the collections, but in the staff," he added. He asked Gerry W. Gawalt, curator of "Creating the United States," to take a bow from the top of the west front steps, where people cheered and clapped.

Staff watching the debut of a new HISTORY channel video, which with other videos is being shown for visitor orientation, commented that these productions feature not "just the stuff" but also the staff—curators, reference librarians, catalogers, preservationists, mail processors, deck hands—all talking with great enthusiasm about the knowledge and wonders contained in the collections.

Billington said later the thing he likes most about the new technology used in the Library of Congress Experience is its effect on the Library's curators. "They have so much more than just knowledge of the collections. They have a passion and enthusiasm that they can now express to a much broader audience [with the use of technology]. When they get going, they aren't just expounding on what they know about something, but what it means. This chain of enthusiasm is the basis of education."

Spirits Soar Inside and Out

While dark clouds scudded overhead, dropping a morning shower or two and making event planners nervous, the day's festivities began promptly on the plaza at 11 a.m. A Library of Congress Chorale octet sang the first and the rarely heard second verse of "The Star Spangled Banner." (The Music Division holds the first book publication of the anthem, in Francis Scott Key's "Defence of Fort M'Henry," printed in Hagerstown, Md., in 1814.)

Nancy Alfaro

The Montgomery College Wind Ensemble of Rockville plays John Philip Sousa's "Library of Congress March" as the bronze front doors open.

After his opening remarks, the Librarian led a small group of dignitaries up the west front steps to open the front doors to the Great Hall as the Montgomery College Wind Ensemble of Rockville, Md., conducted by Steven Czarkowski, played the "Library of Congress March." (Music specialist Loras Schissel found this unfinished, untitled manuscript sketch in the Library's John Philip Sousa Collection and supervised its arrangement by Stephen Bulla for its premiere performance at the Library in 2003. A new Web site devoted to Sousa is accessible at **www.loc.gov/performingarts/**).

Furling and unfurling large colorful umbrellas with the passing of April showers, visitors of all ages waited patiently in long lines to ascend the west-facing steps of the Thomas Jefferson Building and move through security checkpoints operated by cheerful officers. "Welcome to the Library of Congress," one officer said to each new visitor.

A shower that aspired, briefly, to be a downpour drove visitors to shelter in the Carriageway below the plaza, leaving three poets, Grace Cavalieri, Ethelbert Miller and Dan Logan, to read their poems to a small, wet and determined group of listeners.

Doc Scantlin — dapper in a morning suit and spats — and his Imperial Palms Orchestra were feeling their oats. They played Big Band oldies with verve while the orchestra's blonde singer, Chou Chou, warbled and vamped in a sparkly gold lamé gown.

While these entertainments amused visitors on the plaza, an estimated 5,500 guests experienced the day's main attraction – the public spaces of the Library of Congress. ◆

Gail Fineberg is the editor of The Gazette, the Library's staff newsletter.

Michaela McNichol

Michaela McNichol

Left, Benjamin, 3, and dad Matt Berzok, Washington, D.C., enjoy plaza entertainment. Above, Morgan Egan, 9, of Cape Coral, Fla., grooves with the music on the plaza.

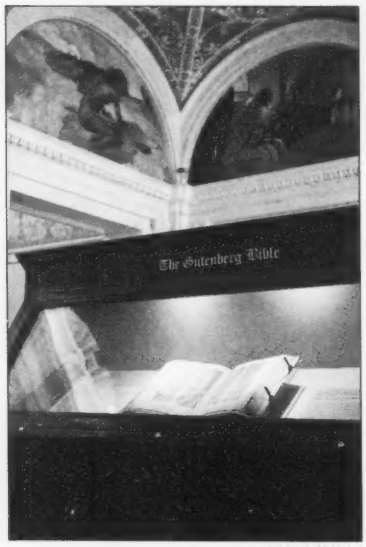
The Art and Architecture of the Thomas Jefferson Building

Visitors to the Library's historic Thomas Jefferson Building enter directly into the first floor Great Hall through three bronze doors. The doors were opened to the public for the first time in nearly two decades as the Library launched the new Experience with a public celebration Saturday, April 12, the day before Jefferson's 265th birthday.

From the entry, visitors are directed to one of two orientation galleries flanking the Great Hall, where information about events and how to navigate the new Experience is presented on overhead monitors. A multimedia "overture" delivering more than a thousand images and sounds from the Library's collections plays on a multi-screen collage in each orientation gallery.

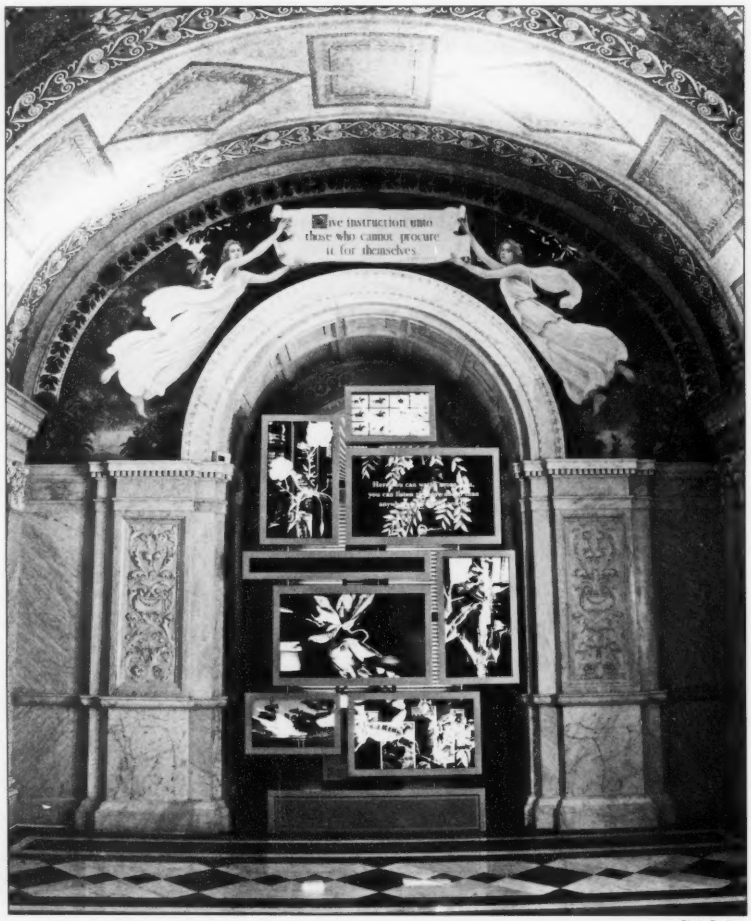
In the Orientation Galleries, each visitor receives a "Passport to Knowledge," a guide to the "greatest hits" of the Experience with instructions for self-guided audio tours.

Later in 2008, a unique barcode on the Passport to Knowledge will allow visitors to play a game-based activity called Knowledge Quest and to "bookmark" objects of interest for later exploration on a personalized Web site at **myLOC.gov**.



Michaela McNichol

New technologies allow visitors to explore the Gutenberg Bible.



Chris Carlson

Dynamic seven-screen video arrays give visitors in two Orientation Galleries a dazzling audiovisual sampling of the diverse collections and programs at the Library.

Bible Collection

In the Great Hall, one of the Library's top treasures, the Gutenberg Bible, is displayed along with the Giant Bible of Mainz. A special new interactive station explains their rarity and relative position in the history of the written word, and touch-screen technology allows visitors to virtually turn the pages and explore each page of the illuminated Latin texts. The Gutenberg Bible was the first book printed with movable metal type; it was produced in Mainz, Germany, in the mid-1450s and is one of three perfect vellum copies in existence. Its predecessor, the Giant Bible of Mainz, is a beautiful example of a hand-lettered, hand-illuminated book of its era.

Creating the United States

On the second floor (mezzanine level) is the new exhibit "Creating the United States", where visitors are first greeted by an interactive video wall that senses their presence and reveals varied historical information based on where the visitor is standing.

"Creating the United States" tells the story of how the Founding

Fathers used creativity, collaboration and compromise to form the nation, with a focus on the words and phrases that created the republic. Visitors can examine and interact with historic drafts of the Declaration of Independence, George Washington's copy of the Constitution and John Beckley's Bill of Rights.

Thomas Jefferson's Library

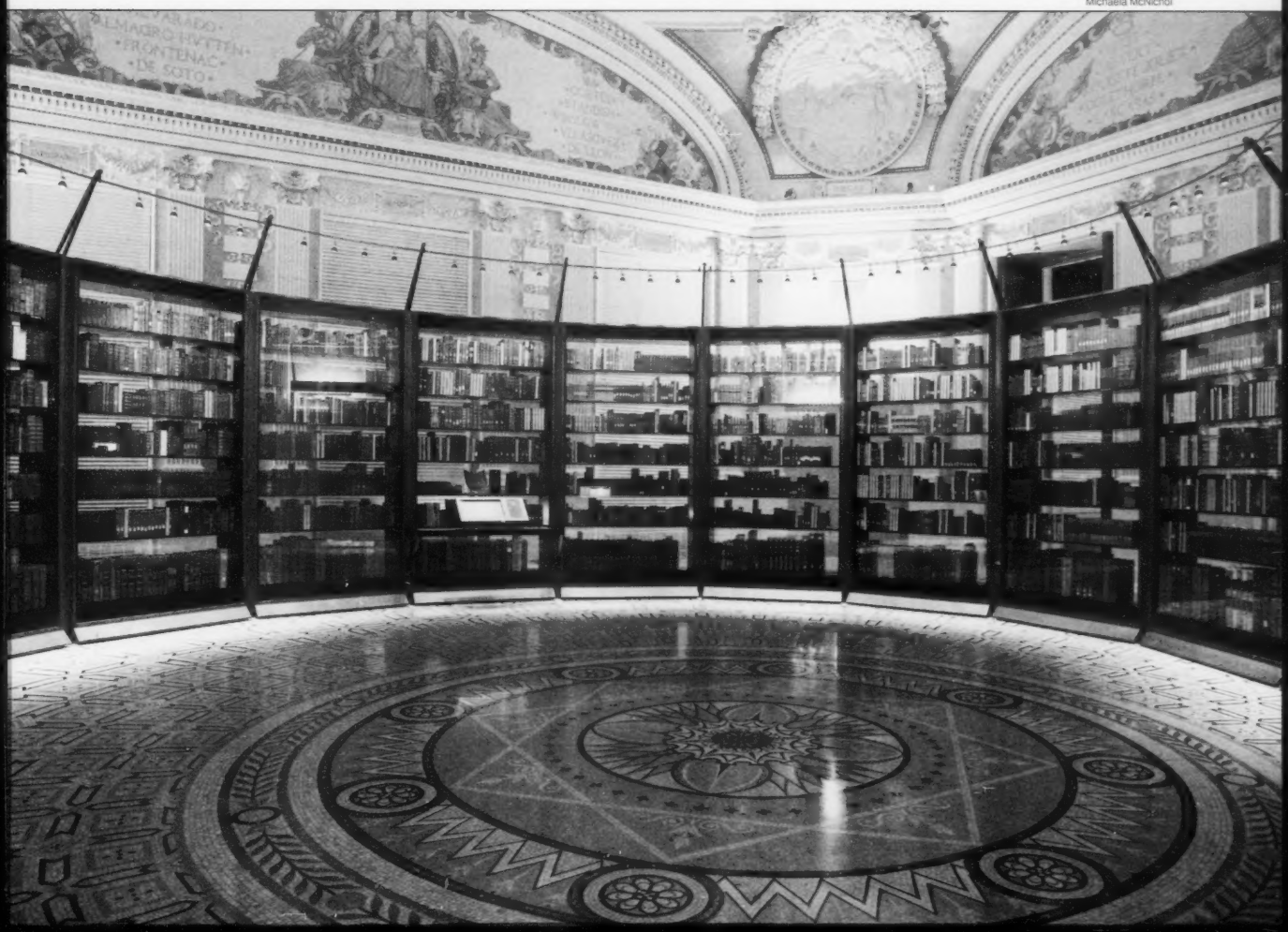
On display in a set of bookcases arrayed on the display floor like a curving cross-section of a shell are more than 6,000 volumes, including 2,000 originals, from Jefferson's library. Jefferson followed a modified version of an organizational system created by British philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626) to arrange the books in his library, which are divided into the categories of Memory, Reason and Imagination.

Jefferson's personal library features thousands of original volumes that provided the foundation for the Library of Congress and its universal

Chris Carlson

Above, "Creating the United States" explores the development of the nation's founding documents. Below, Thomas Jefferson's personal library is now on display at the Library of Congress.

Michaela McNichol



collections. Using interactive page-turning technology, visitors can navigate several of the books and learn how one of America's greatest thinkers was inspired.

Exploring the Early Americas

The Library of Congress Experience incorporates the "Exploring the Early Americas" exhibit, which opened in December 2007. (See Information Bulletin, January/February 2008).

The exhibition tells the story of the Americas before the time of Columbus, as well as the period of contact and conquest and their aftermath. It features unique objects from the Library's Jay I. Kislak Collection, as well as Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 Map of the World, the first document to use the word "America." Seven high-tech interactive displays augment the artifacts, along with two hands-on stations where patrons can delve deeper into the collection and explore the history it represents.

Companion Web Site (myLOC.gov)

A companion Web site to the Library of Congress Experience, myLOC.gov, also launched on April 12. Hosted by Terremark Federal Group, Inc., a subsidiary of Terremark Worldwide, Inc., the site features interactive versions of the same exhibition content from the physical experience, educational resources, information for visitors, and a page where users can create their own virtual collection of Library objects. Later in 2008, the Passport to Knowledge will connect onsite visitors to their bookmarked content at **myLOC.gov**.

Interactive educational content is the hallmark of the Library's new Experience. Teachers will have access to a range of educational resources that will transform a visit to the Library into a

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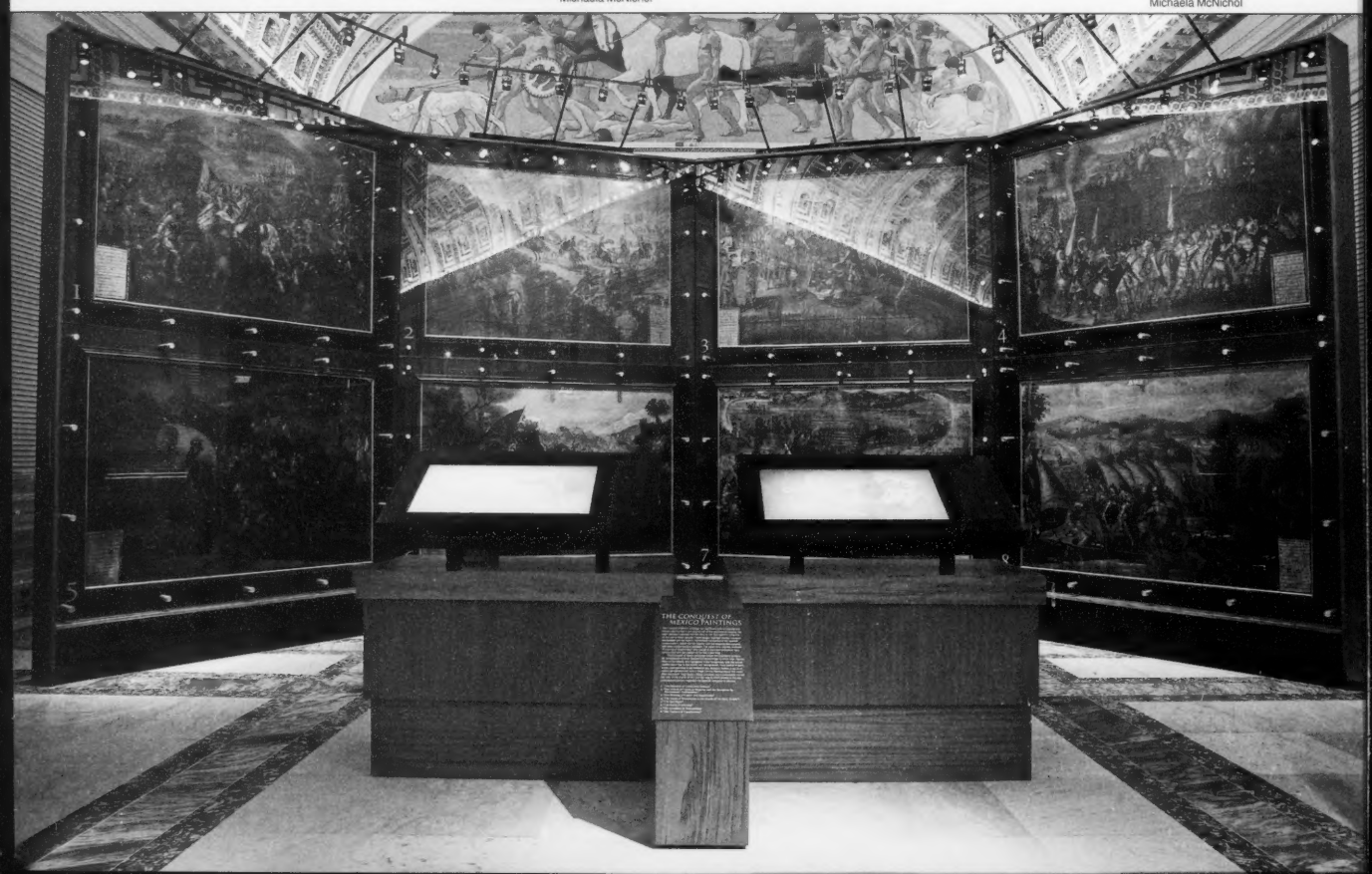
Michaela McNichol

At left, "Exploring the Early Americas" features unique objects from the Library's Jay I. Kislak Collection, and Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 Map of the World, the first document to use the word "America." Below, details from the "Conquest of Mexico" paintings are available using the touch-screen technology of the interactive kiosks in the "Exploring the Early Americas" exhibition.

Michaela McNichol



Michaela McNichol

The latest class of Library of Congress Living Legends are, from left, Bob Schieffer, Frank Robinson, Cokie Roberts, David McCullough, Herbie Hancock, Julian Bond, Mario Andretti and James Billington. Mickey Hart, far right, conducted the induction ceremony on the opening day of the Library of Congress Experience.

'Living Legends' Receive Library's Highest Honor

By AUDREY FISCHER

For achievements that Librarian of Congress James H. Billington described as "distinguished, sustained and remarkable," seven exceptional Americans were designated "Living Legends" by the Library on April 12.

To his great surprise, the Librarian was named the eighth new Living Legend of the day, becoming the 98th person to receive the prestigious medal since the Library's bicentennial in 2000.

"Dr. Billington has taken this library into the digital age," said Mickey Hart, musicologist and former percussionist for the Grateful Dead, who presided over the awards ceremony. Hart, a Living-Legend honoree in 2000 and a member of the Library's American Folklife Center Board, praised the Librarian for "his vision of a digital Alexandria."

"All of this technology has taken shape during his watch," Hart added, alluding to the interactive Library of Congress Experience, which opened to the public earlier in the day.

Many of the Living Legends expressed their surprise at being given the distinction, and several emphasized the significance of being a "Living Legend."

"I thought I was being asked to cover the event," joked chief Washington correspondent and veteran journalist Bob Schieffer.

"Why me?" was the reaction of Baseball Hall of Famer Frank Robinson. "I'm just a simple person who played baseball. I've won team awards for a team sport, but this is a different stage."

"I could win a pennant with this lineup," he quipped.

"What do we all have in common?" wondered jazz great Herbie Hancock. He concluded, "Each of us in our own way thinks outside the box. That is what is truly American. My ancestors went outside their chains to create the music I play. The African-American slavery experience changed the cultural fabric of America."

"The word for it is 'pride,'" said racing icon Mario Andretti, expressing his reaction to the award. "Pride for myself and my family, to be among these very prestigious inductees." He came to America from his native Italy at the age of 15.

"I write history, but you see here a lineup of people who have made history," said historian and Living Legend designee David McCullough.

"This is our American Acropolis—it is fitting that the Capitol is side-by-side with our greatest Library. To be honored here is as high a moment as I can imagine," McCullough said.

"It's an enormous honor to be seated with this constellation of Living Legends," said civil rights activist Julian Bond, who proudly noted that his mother was a librarian. Bond, who is chairman of the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), noted that the organization's papers are among the largest collections in the Library.

Speaking of large collections, veteran journalist and author Cokie Roberts mentioned Thomas Jefferson's library—more than 6,000 volumes on display in the Southwest Pavilion."It was perhaps a great blessing the British handed the Congress," said Roberts, referring to the burn-

ing of the U.S. Capitol in 1814 and Congress's subsequent purchase of Jefferson's personal library to rebuild the Library's early collection. She joked that Jefferson's daughter, Martha Jefferson Randolph, was probably delighted that her father "finally got rid of all those books," which were taking up three rooms in the family home at Monticello.

On hand to see Roberts accept her award was her mother, Lindy Boggs, the first woman elected to Congress from Louisiana, and a former ambassador to the Vatican. "Mother has prodded this nation relentlessly to be a better union," said Roberts.

For his part, the Librarian thanked the crowd for coming to "celebrate achievements of such diversity" and invited them to come back to visit the Library.

"This is your library. It's all free, it's all yours and much of it is also online."

Established during the Library's Bicentennial celebration in 2000, the "Living Legend" award honors artists, writers, activists, filmmakers, physicians, entertainers, sports figures and public servants who have made significant contributions to America's diverse cultural, scientific and social heritage. For more information and a list of inductees, go to **www.loc.gov/about/awardshonors/livinglegends/**. ◆

2008 Living Legend Inductees

Michaela McNichol

Julian Bond congratulates Mario Andretti, who said after receiving his medal, "I am so delighted to represent the sport of motor racing." Bond followed, saying, "I am at a loss for words."

Michaela McNichol

Columnist, national best-selling author, news analyst and political commentator Cokie Roberts.

Michaela McNichol

"I'm honored to be among this incredible, august group of people," said Herbie Hancock, right, after receiving his award. When it was David McCullough's turn at the podium, he said he discovered "the pull of history" at the Library, where he researched his first book. "I am infinitely indebted, for my way of life, to this institution."

• **Mario Andretti**. Referred to by many as the "greatest race car driver of all time," the skilled and versatile driver produced some of racing history's most notable wins including the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, the Formula One World Championship and the Pikes Peak Hill Climb.

• **James H. Billington**. The 13th person to hold the position since the Library's founding in 2000, the Librarian of Congress celebrated his 20-year-tenure in 2007. He has worked to harness digital technology and the Internet to make the content of the Library available to users around the world.

• **Julian Bond**. This Civil Rights activist and NAACP Chairman has been a social change agent since 1960. He served more than 20 years in the Georgia General Assembly and is a university professor and writer.

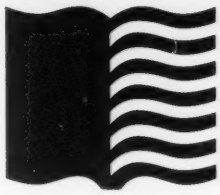
• **Herbie Hancock**. An Academy Award- and Grammy Award-winning jazz pianist and composer, this icon of modern music has seen commercial and artistic success in acoustic and electronic jazz and R&B since 1960.

• **David McCullough**. An acclaimed historian, his books have been praised for their scholarship and understanding of American life. He has received two National Book Awards, two Pulitzer Prizes and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

• **Cokie Roberts**. This columnist and national bestselling author also serves as senior news analyst for NPR and political commentator for ABC News. She received the Edward R. Murrow Award for radio and was the first broadcast journalist to win the Everett McKinley Dirksen Award for coverage of Congress.

• **Frank Robinson**. Rookie of the Year in 1956 and MVP in both leagues (with the Cincinnati Reds in 1961 and the Baltimore Orioles in 1966), this Major League Baseball Hall of Fame member was the first African-American manager (for the Cleveland Indians) in Major League history.

• **Bob Schieffer**. Veteran newsman and host of CBS's Face the Nation, he is broadcast journalism's most experienced Washington reporter. He is a member of the Broadcasting/Cable Hall of Fame and recipient of the 2003 Paul White Award recognizing his lifetime contribution to electronic journalism. ◆



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
IN THE NEWS

By ERIN ALLEN

The media was abuzz with stories following the April 12 opening of the new Library of Congress Experience. *(See story on page 71.)*

Ed Rothstein of **The New York Times** offered a review of the "Experience," including his thoughts on two of the new exhibitions, "Creating the United States" and "Thomas Jefferson's Library." Rothstein said he wished that the technology allowed visitors to explore exhibition items and themes even more deeply, but marveled at the ability to get a clearer understanding of history by highlighting the evolution of the nation's founding documents.

"One way to treat history in an exhibition is to lay out events and surviving objects and explain their importance," said Rothstein. "Another approach is to show that every product of that immutable past was once something contingent, coming into existence because of choices made. A historical document may appear unchanging, but when it was written, it was growing out of a process of revision and debate. In this light, history is seen as lived experience, I think this is what the library is reaching for with its 'Experience' idea."

"In this light, history is seen as lived experience, I think this is what the library is reaching for with its 'Experience' idea."

—Ed Rothstein

Ann Geracimos of the **Washington Times** said the "Experience" showcases the Library's history and holdings in innovative ways that are a bit flashy. According to Geracimos, "Some dignified flash probably is good for a place that too often is regarded by the uninformed as off limits except to scholars and, of course, members of Congress."

"That's not to say the show inside isn't educational," she continued. "There is plenty to please scholars traditionally drawn to the resources of the world's largest library, as well as more casual visitors."

"Touch, not shush" was the slogan **USA Today** gave to the new initiative, and the blog **dcist** was happy to report that the Library has "made it fully into the 21st century."

Kathy Dempsey of **infotoday.com** said that the Library has again put itself at the forefront of the digitization movement with the "Experience." She credits the institution's knowledgeable curators for conveying interesting tidbits about some of the items on display.

Also covering the debut of the Library of Congress Experience were **Roll Call**, the **New York Times Magazine, The Orange County Register, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Miami Herald**, Web sites such as **CNET news.com, newsblaze.com** and blogs like the **Seattle Post Intelligencer's Book Patrol**.

- The Library's partnership with Microsoft for the interactive technology and Terremark Federal Group, Inc., for the Web site myLOC.gov, was the focus of a number of stories about the new Experience in technology publications such as **PC World, Web Host Industry Review, Government Technology** and Web sites like **efluxmedia.com, arstechnica.com** and **tophosts.com**.
- Touting the Library of Congress Experience as a "must see" were outlets like **Destination DC**, the blog **DC Traveler** and the Web site **jaunted.com**, which made sure to mention that even with the addition of innovative technologies, visiting the nation's library is still free.
- The Library's naming of eight Living Legends as part of the April 12 festivities garnered press attention. *(See story on page 79.)* Don Bostrom of **The Morning Call** in Pennsylvania interviewed racing legend Mario Andretti, one of the eight medal recipients and a resident of that state.

"The Library of Congress is visited by millions and millions of people from around the world," said Andretti. "It's going to be pretty neat to be part of something like that."

Also running announcements of the new Living Legends were **ABC News**, which interviewed medal recipient Cokie Roberts, **The Associated Press, Radio World Newspaper, the DC Examiner,** the **Fort Worth Star-Telegram,** the **Milwaukee Journal Sentinel,** the **Plain Dealer** (Cleveland) and the **San Antonio Express-News**.

- Just as the Library of Congress Experience is making collections more accessible through new exhibitions, innovative technology and a companion Web site, the Library is committed to providing physical access to its collections for research purposes. To that end, the institution recently lowered the minimum age for access to the Main Reading Room from 18 to 16. *(See story on page 86.)* Running briefs on the new policy were the washingtonpost.com and one of its web logs, Joel Achenbach's "**achenblog**." **Roll Call** reporters Elizabeth Brotherton and Emily Yehle pointed out that this is the first time in almost a half-century that high-schoolers can use the facility.
- Through a non-exclusive partnership with History™, the Library plans to showcase its collections to the public through innovative educational programming. *(See story on page 87.)* Abbe Raven, president and CEO of A&E TV Networks, told **Daily Variety** that one of History's goals is to draw on the wealth of the Library materials and use the company's filmmaking and storytelling experience to create specific shows for History™. "We'll look for the story behind the artifacts," said Raven.

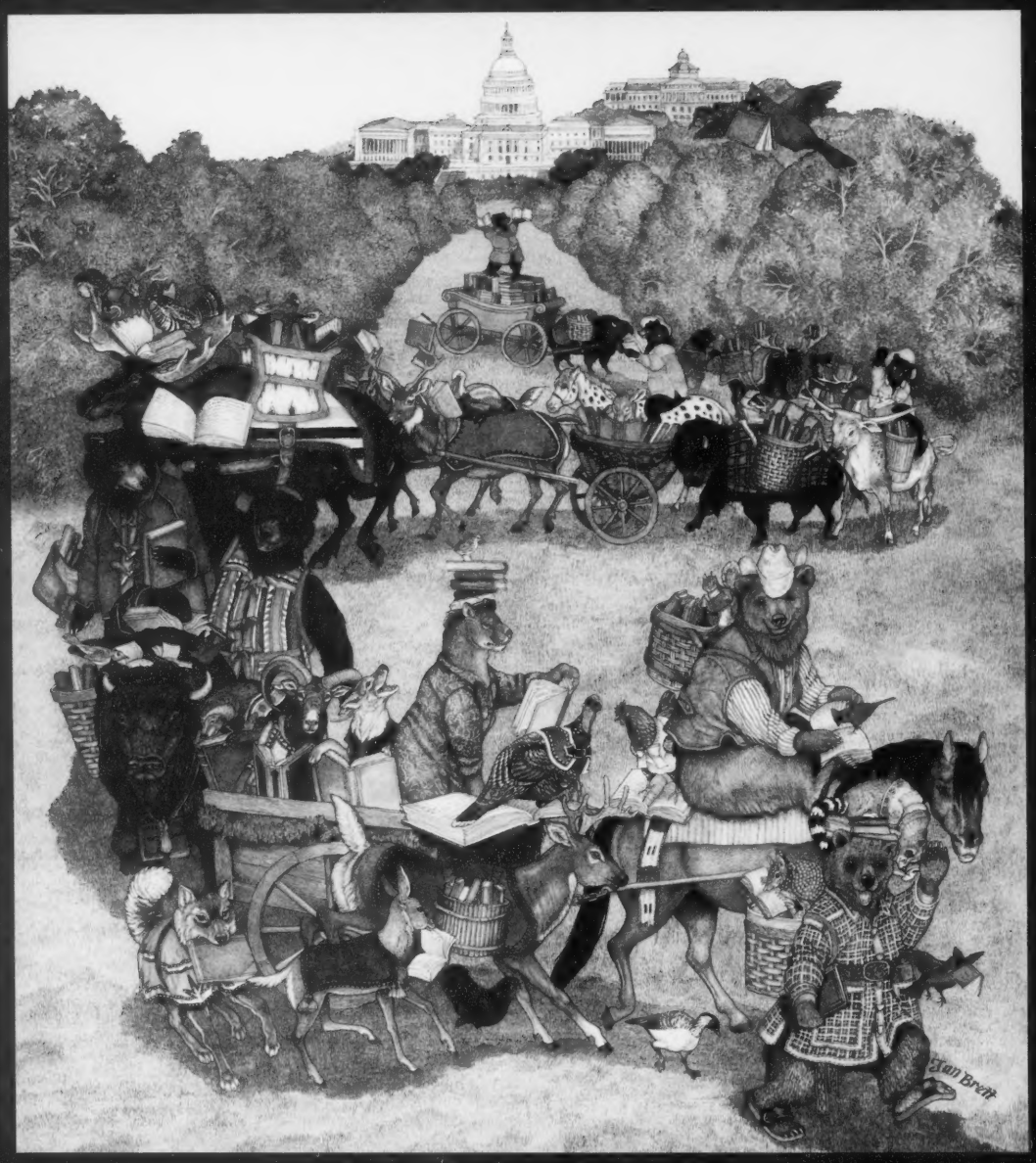
An **Associated Press** story about the partnership with History™ was picked up by outlets such as **Christian Science Monitor,** the **Plain Dealer (Cleveland),** the **Dallas Morning News**, the **Denver Post**, the **Detroit News**, the **Houston Chronicle**, the **LA Times**, the **Minneapolis Star Tribune**, the **Times-Picayune (New Orleans)**, the **New York Daily News,** the **New York Post, The New York Times,** the **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the Richmond Times Dispatch,** the **San Jose Mercury News,** the **Seattle Post-Intellingencer,** the **Seattle Times,** the **St. Petersburg Times (Florida),** the **Tampa Tribune,** the **Washington Post,** the **Washington Times, Newsweek** and **National Public Radio**.

In addition, other stories about the partnership ran in outlets including **Reuters, The Hollywood Reporter, Roll Call, VNU Entertainment News Wire, Broadcasting & Cable, Multichannel News** and **cable360.net**. ◆

Erin Allen is a writer-editor in the Library's Public Affairs Office.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS & LAURA BUSH

NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL



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© Andrew Eccles. Used by permission of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation Inc.

This studio portrait of Jamar Roberts, Amos Mechanic Jr. and Olivia Brown is part of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation Collection held by the Library's Music Division. Right, Alvin Ailey.

Cultural Ambassador

Alvin Ailey Exhibition Opens at Library

On March 30, 1958, Alvin Ailey's new company of seven dancers performed for the first time in New York City. Fifty years later, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT) has performed for more than 21 million people in 48 states and in 71 countries on six continents. The Library of Congress commemorates the troupe's golden anniversary with the exhibition "Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: 50 Years as Cultural Ambassador to the World."

The exhibition, which opens on May 8 and will remain on view through Sept. 6, is showcased in the foyer of the Performing Arts Reading Room on the first floor of the James Madison Building. Exhibition hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Alvin Ailey (1931–1989) founded AAADT to carry out his vision of a company dedicated to enriching the heritage of American modern dance, as well as safeguarding the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience. Since its founding, the company has grown into a large multi-racial dance company and one of the most respected and popular modern-dance organizations in the world.

The exhibition, featuring material from the Library's Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation Archive and selected items from the Lester Horton Dance Theater Collection, offers a window into Ailey's roots at the Los Angeles-based Lester Horton Dance Theater, his repertory of 79 choreographic works, the development of his dance company and the continuation of the Ailey legacy under the leadership of Judith Jamison.

The exhibition draws on an extensive collection of photographs and includes images of works by some of the 70 choreographers who have created dances for AAADT, as well as extraordinary examples of Ailey's most beloved creations, including "Blues Suite," "Revelations" and "Cry." The exhibition also features a short film presentation that provides insight into the history and development of AAADT.

The Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation Archive was obtained by the Library in 2006 and contains photographs, films, videotapes, performance programs, correspondence and other written materials relating to the choreographer's life and career, the development of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation and materials that highlight Jamison's contributions as an Ailey dancer and artistic director of AAADT after Ailey's death.

Following its closing on Sept. 6, the exhibition will travel to the Library of Congress/Ira Gershwin Gallery at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, where it will open on Oct. 4. ◆

Amazing Fantasy

Library Receives Original 1962 Illustrations for First Spider-Man Story

Matt Raymond

At left, the first page of "Amazing Fantasy #15"

In a deed of superheroic proportions, an anonymous donor has given the Library of Congress the original artwork by Steve Ditko for Marvel Comics' "Amazing Fantasy #15" – the comic book that introduced Spider-Man in August 1962.

This unique set of drawings for 24 pages features the story of the origin of Spider-Man along with three other short stories — also written by Stan Lee and drawn by Steve Ditko — for the same issue: "The Bell-Ringer," "Man in the Mummy Case" and "There Are Martians Among Us."

"The donation of these wonderful drawings is a treasured gift to the American people. The opportunity to see the original art behind the published stories will benefit comic-book readers as well as popular-culture scholars," said Sara W. Duke, curator of Popular and Applied Graphic Art in the Library's Prints and Photographs Division. "Looking at the drawings inspires a new appreciation for the artist's skill and design choices and also deepens our understanding of how a superhero created to attract a teenage audience became a cultural icon with mass appeal."

For comic-book scholars and fans, this donation is a fantasy-come-true. Those who have heard the news of the survival of these drawings and their future availability at the Library of Congress have already expressed great excitement.

The black-and-white, large-format drawings (21 x 15 inches) detail the transformation of high school bookworm Peter Parker into Spider-Man. He is bitten by a radioactive spider, discovers his new powers and develops his now well-known disguise. The first episode concludes with several of the most famous lines attached to the story of Spider-Man: "With great power there must also come great responsibility ... and so a legend is born and a new name is added to the roster of those who make the world of fantasy the most exciting realm of all."

To view a sample of these drawings, visit the Library of Congress blog at **www.loc.gov/blog/?p=290**.

The donor, who has asked to remain anonymous, preserved the drawings with great care before turning to the Library of Congress to ensure that the designs will be available to researchers for generations to come. In the next few weeks, the Library plans to scan the drawings for easy access on-site in the Prints and Photographs Reading Room, and the digital reference copies will also help preserve the fragile original artwork.

Appointments to view the original drawings can be requested through the Prints & Photographs Division's "Ask a Librarian" service at **www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-print.html.**

The Spider-Man drawings join a premier collection of original cartoons in the Library's Prints & Photographs Division. The collection includes more than 125,000 caricatures, comic strips, and political and social commentaries from the 1600s to the present. An ongoing program to preserve and exhibit drawings and to encourage cartoon research is sponsored by the Caroline and Erwin Swann Foundation for Caricature and Cartoon. For more information, visit **www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/swannhome.html.** ◆

I'LL FASTEN ONE TO EACH ARM-- IT'LL OPERATE BY THE SLIGHTEST PRESSURE OF ANY FINGER!
I'LL NEED A NAME --WELL, GUESS SPIDERMAN IS AS GOOD AS ANY! LOOKS PRETTY GOOD, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF!

Prints and Photographs Division

Peter Parker first dons his Spider-Man disguise.

Spider-Man In The News

By ERIN ALLEN

Comic-book fans united in praise in April when the Library of Congress announced the acquisition of Steve Ditko's original artwork for Marvel Comics' "Amazing Fantasy #15"—the comic book that introduced Spider-Man in August 1962. *(See story on page 84.)* The set of 24 pages includes the story of the origin of "your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man" along with three other short stories also written by Stan Lee and drawn by Ditko.

Although the Library announced the anonymous donation in an April 30 press release and on its blog (**www.loc.gov/blog/?p=290**), the blogosphere got wind of it a week earlier when mention appeared in Comics DC (**http://comicsdc.blogspot.com**), moderated by comic enthusiast Mike Rhode.

Commenting on the Library's blog, Mr. Grouchypants said "This is great news for people concerned about preserving Spider-Man's legacy for geeksterity."

Torsten Adair added, "I hope this brings some much deserved attention to the Swann Collection at the Library. I was lucky enough to live in D.C. for three years, and spent many a wonderful time doing comics 'research'!"

LA Times blog (**http://latimesblogs.latimes.com**) commenter Paul Lonsdale said "'with great power comes great responsibility' ... this responsible donation makes many people very happy!"

Uncle Ernie of Uncle Ernie's Creature Ink blog (**http://barking-dogs.blogspot.com**) said "Comic book art is a narrative art form. Individual panels or parts of the art are interesting to see pulled out of context; but the art is still meant to be looked at in its entirety, as a part of a whole, and in sequence. To have the complete set of original art, together and now protected to such a seminal part of comic book history and popular culture, is amazing." ◆

Erin Allen is a writer-editor in the Library's Public Affairs Office.

Library, Saudi University Form World Digital Library Partnership

The Library of Congress and the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) on April 9 announced a partnership to promote research of the history of science in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

The Library and the university together will convene an international advisory committee of leading scholars and curators to map out a strategy for identifying, selecting, digitizing, cataloging, annotating and promoting scholarly research about manuscripts and other rare and unique materials relating to science in the Arab and Islamic worlds, and for including these materials in the World Digital Library (WDL) and other digital library projects.

The partnership will enable the university, an international, graduate-level research university opening in Saudi Arabia in 2009, to complement its academic and research programs in cutting-edge science and engineering with research and outreach programs aimed at giving students and faculty an appreciation of the rich history of scientific inquiry and discovery in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

KAUST also intends to play a collaborative, facilitating role internationally to support the efforts of universities, libraries and museums around the world whose collective work is essential to further scholarship in this area.

The partnership will allow the Library of Congress to work with KAUST and its WDL partners to develop the history of science in the Arab and Islamic worlds as a theme in the WDL, to be launched at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in early 2009.

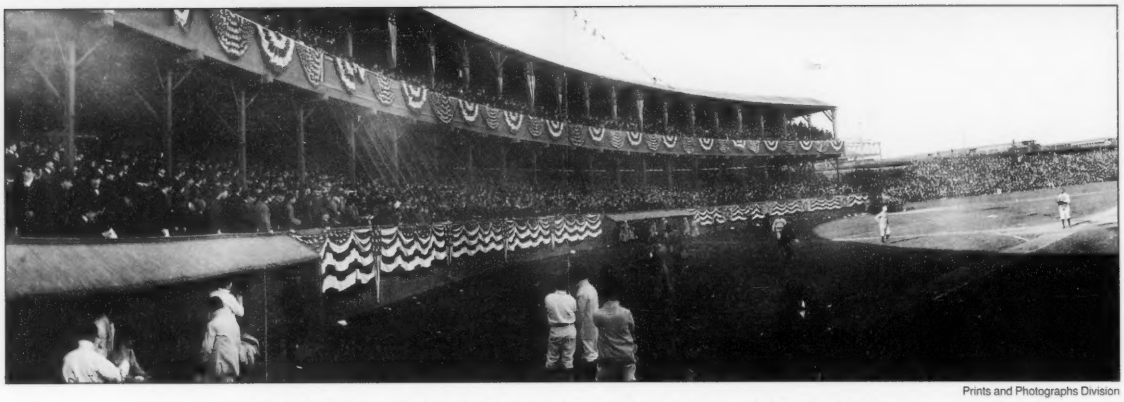
The National Library and Archives of Egypt and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina are already WDL partners, and they contributed to the development of the WDL prototype that was shown at the UNESCO General Conference in October 2007. The partnership with KAUST will assist the Library of Congress and its WDL partners in tapping into the most authoritative international scholarship in the field.

"The cooperation with KAUST will help us to engage leading scholars and curators from the Islamic world, Europe and the United States in developing this important element of the WDL," said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. "We see this not only as important for the particular topic of science in the Arab world, but as a model for bringing together experts from many countries to work together to ensure the highest level of quality as we bring together online the widely scattered primary documents of different cultures for the vast audience using the Internet."

Barry Wheeler

Mary Jane Deeb, chief of the African and Middle Eastern Division, shows some of the Library's rare science texts in Arabic to Nadhmi Al-Nasr, interim president of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), second from right. Others in the photo are affiliated with KAUST.

KAUST's Interim President, Nadhmi Al-Nasr, said "Part of the vision for KAUST is to serve as a reminder that this is not the first time the Arab world has made great scientific and technological contributions to humankind. Through this partnership with the Library of Congress and with many other universities, museums, and collections around the world, we look forward to helping make this great history of Islamic science and technology available to all people through the World Digital Library." ◆



Prints and Photographs Division

Opening Day, N.Y. baseball club, gelatin silver print, ca. 1903

Play Ball!

Library Launches Baseball Resources Site

America's Library salutes America's favorite pastime—and the opening season of the new Washington Nationals Park—with the launch of a new baseball-history resource page: **www.loc.gov/topics/baseball/**.

The Library's rich, unique collections offer a first-hand look at the history of baseball in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the new Web resource highlights selected items that document the history of baseball in America and Americans' fascination with the game. Baseball history unfolds in player profiles, photographs, personal accounts, newspaper accounts of historic games and events, official games guides, films and memorabilia—including baseball cards dating from 1887.

The multimedia Web site offers easy access to a sampling of visual images, including photographs of notable baseball figures and subjects. Included are selections of audio and video presentations, such as Webcasts of lectures, as well as unique sound artifacts. These resources are only a small portion of the 138 million items in the Library's extensive holdings. Collection guides aid the researcher. ◆

Prints and Photographs Division

Ty Cobb at Griffith Stadium, Washington, D.C.

Welcome, Young Scholars

Main Reading Room Open to Researchers 16 and Older

The Library of Congress recently announced that the minimum age for use of the Main Reading Room to access the Library's physical collections for research purposes has been lowered to 16. The previous requirement was that researchers be above high-school age.

"The Library of Congress is always looking for ways to create new lifelong learners, to expand access to knowledge and to spark the creativity of future generations," said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington during the April 23 announcement.

"We want people of all ages to be aware of the almost limitless resources that are available in libraries, including their de facto national library, especially at a time when the amount of information online still represents only a tiny fraction of the sum total of human knowledge," said Billington.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are more than 8 million 16- and 17-year-olds living in the United States.

Public users of Library of Congress reading rooms are required to have a reader identification card issued by the Library. The cards are free and can be obtained by presenting a government-issued picture identification card, such as a driver's license, passport or other valid ID. Researchers must register in person at the Reader Registration Station, located in room 140 of the James Madison Building, 101 Independence Ave. S.E., Washington, D.C. Hours are 8:30 a.m. – 9 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. The Library cannot accept registrations via mail, telephone or the Internet.

For more information on the Library's reading rooms, visit **www.loc.gov/rr/**. ◆

Library and HISTORY Join in Multimedia Partnership

The Library of Congress and HISTORY have joined forces to create a multimedia partnership to showcase the Library's collections to the vast audience of the HISTORY brands including the HISTORY channel, history.com and other television properties. The partnership will also bring historical content to more than 200,000 teachers across the country that use the channel's branded educational materials in their classrooms. The announcement was made on April 14 by Librarian of Congress James H. Billington and Abbe Raven, president and CEO of A&E Television Networks.

The non-exclusive partnership will include co-branded content on **history.com**, as well as original specials and short- and long-form historical documentary programming on the HISTORY channel.

HISTORY also produced a short film and new content for the new Library of Congress Experience, which opened publicly April 12 in the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building and online at **myLOC.gov**.

The goal of the partnership is to bring the unparalleled collections of the Library of Congress to broader audiences on the platform of their choice—whether that is mobile, broadband or in high definition on HISTORY HD.

"We're pleased to join forces with HISTORY in this effort that will help better fulfill our mission of making knowledge more accessible and useful to the Congress and the public. With more than 138 million items in our collections, there are millions of stories waiting to be told. We're delighted that HISTORY will help us tell some of them," Billington said.

"This partnership is exciting because it matches the vast resources of the Library of Congress with some the most powerful and trusted brands on the media landscape." Raven said.

"It will result in millions of Americans having better access and knowledge of history by utilizing the collections of one of the nation's greatest institutions," she said. ◆

American Choral Music Web Site Launched

In collaboration with the American Choral Directors Association, the Library of Congress Music Division has launched a Web site as part of its online Performing Arts Encyclopedia, called "American Choral Music, 1870-1923." The site is available at **http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/html/choralmusic/**.

This presentation features 28 pieces of choral music by American composers, illuminating a period beginning shortly after the Civil War, when many large mixed-voice choral societies proliferated and enormous choral festivals became a popular medium of expression in American musical society. The site provides access to significant choral sheet music in the public domain, which can be downloaded for immediate use by choirs and choruses. Included in this collection are examples of both sacred and secular music, a combination of works for mixed choirs, for women's and men's ensembles, and for children's choruses.

George Chadwick, Horatio Parker and Amy Beach

The composers whose works are represented are Amy Beach (Mrs. H.H.A. Beach, 1867-1944), one of the first American composers to be trained completely in the United States and the first American woman to achieve widespread recognition as a composer; Dudley Buck (1839-1909), an organist, conductor and founding director of the Brooklyn Apollo Club's male chorus; George Whitefield Chadwick (1854-1931), credited as the "dean of American Music," a highly respected teacher who reorganized the New England Conservatory; William W. Gilchrist (1846-1916), one of the founding members of the American Guild of Organists; Mabel Wheeler Daniels (1878-1971), who wrote "The Desolate City," op. 21, among other significant works during her many stays at the MacDowell Colony; R. Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943), who as director of the Hampton Institute developed a choir into a superior organization that won critical acclaim in both the United States and Europe; Margaret Ruthven Lang (1867-1972), a composer whose singular song "Ojalá" brought her international attention at the Paris Exposition of 1889; and Horatio William Parker (1863-1919), a composer and educator known for major vocal and choral compositions, many of which are held in manuscript in the Music Division.

Among the first works in the series are "Far Awa'" and "Peace on Earth," by Amy Beach; "O How Amiable," by Dudley Buck; "Elfin Song" and "Inconstancy," by George W. Chadwick; "The Voice of My Beloved," by Mabel Daniels; "There's A Meetin' Here Tonight," and "Done Paid My Vow to the Lord," by Nathaniel Dett; "Ponder My Words," by William Gilchrist; "The Old Man With a Beard," and "The Lonely Rose," by Margaret R. Lang; and "Three Words, "My Love," and "Valentine," from Horatio W. Parker's set of love songs, "Three Choruses, op. 33"

In her "Music's Ten Commandments as Given for Young Composers" (1915), Amy Beach wrote, "Hear as much choral music as possible. The study of voice writing, as illustrated in the master works, is of the greatest importance."

To explore other music, theater and dance collections of the Library, see the Performing Arts Encyclopedia at **www.loc.gov/performingarts/**. ◆

2008 Bobbitt Prize

Hicok, Charles Wright Win National Poetry Honor

The distinguished Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry, created 20 years ago, has been awarded to two poets who teach at universities in Virginia: Bob Hicok of Virginia Tech and Charles Wright of the University of Virginia.

Hicok and Wright received the 2008 award and read selections of their work at the Library on April 28.

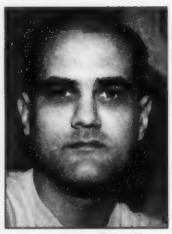
The biennial prize, the tenth to be given, was split between Hicok, who was awarded the prize for his book "This Clumsy Living," published in 2007 by the University of Pittsburgh Press, and Wright, who was honored for lifetime achievement.

The $10,000 prize recognizes a book of poetry written by an American and published during the preceding two years and/or the lifetime achievement of an American poet. The prize is donated by the family of the late Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt of Austin, Texas, in her memory, and awarded at the Library of Congress.

Bobbitt was President Lyndon B. Johnson's sister. While a graduate student in Washington, D.C., during the 1930s, Rebekah Johnson met college student O.P. Bobbitt when they both worked in the cataloging department of the Library of Congress. They married and returned to Texas.

Holly Wright

Charles Wright



Robert Turney

Bob Hicok

Bob Hicok was born in 1960. He is an assistant professor of English at Virginia Tech. Hicok has published five books of poetry: "This Clumsy Living" (2007); "Insomnia Diary" (2004); "Animal Soul" (2001), a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award; "Plus Shipping" (1998); and "The Legend of Light" (1995), which was an American Library Association Booklist Notable Book of the Year and won the 1995 Felix Pollak Prize in Poetry. Hicok's accomplishments include two Pushcart Prizes, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and publication in three volumes of Best American Poetry.

Charles Wright was born in 1935. He is the Souder Family Professor of English at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. He received a bachelor's degree from Davidson College and a master's from the University of Iowa. His most recent works include "Littlefoot: A Poem" (2007) and "Scar Tissue" (2006), which was the international winner of the Griffin Poetry Prize. Wright won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for "Black Zodiac" (1997). Additional honors and accolades include the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award of Merit Medal, an Ingram Merrill Fellowship in Poetry, a Guggenheim Fellowship in Poetry, and two awards from National Endowment for the Arts. Wright became a Chancellor of The Academy of American Poets in 1999.

The winners of the 2008 Bobbitt National Prize were chosen by three jurors: Mark Doty, the John and Rebecca Moores Professor of English in the graduate program at the University of Houston; Betty Sue Flowers, the director of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, who is a critic, poet and former English professor at the University of Texas at Austin; and Ira Sadoff, the Dana Professor of Poetry at Colby College. ◆

Experience

continued from page 78

meaningful experience for learners of all ages. Onsite and online multimedia activities will engage young people to think critically, inspiring lifelong learning and future exploration of the Library's collections.

"Inspiration Across the Nation"

The myLOC.gov Web site also brings the Experience home to the public through "Inspiration Across the Nation," an online campaign to celebrate and showcase the creativity and contributions of our nation's early cultures, great minds and other founding influences. People nationwide will have the opportunity to submit to the Library their own creative works in the form of stories, poems, video, audio, photos–anything that can be transmitted in an electronic file. Select entries will be chosen to be part of the Library's permanent collections.

To extend this national celebration into local communities around the country, the Library and several public libraries will host events tied to the theme "Inspiration Across the Nation." These events will begin in fall 2008 and continue in 2009.

"Visitors to the new Library of Congress Experience will find an amazing place where they will experience highlights of the largest collection anywhere of the world's knowledge and America's creativity," said Billington. "They will meet the richness of the past, spark their own curiosity and imagination, and continue the adventure of learning online, at home."

The Library of Congress Experience is made possible by the benefaction of the United States Congress and with major support from John and Maria Kluge, Microsoft Corp., Terremark Worldwide Inc., Marguerite and Gerry Lenfest, David H. Koch, Peter D. and Julie Fisher Cummings, Marjorie S. Fisher, Roger and Susan Hertog, Jay I. Kislak, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Xerox Foundation, Raymond W. Smith, Nancy Glanville Jewell, Beatrice W. Welters, Consuelo Duroc-Danner, Marjorie M. Fisher, and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, with the additional support of other generous donors.

Detailed information on the Experience can be found at a new microsite, **www.loc.gov/experience/**. ◆

Gail Fineberg, Jennifer Gavin and Erin Allen of the Library's Public Affairs Office contributed to this story.

We Three Kings

Stephen King and His Family Meet Young Readers

By JOHN Y. COLE

Authors Stephen King, his wife Tabitha and their son Owen read from their books and answered questions from D.C. area high-school students at an entertaining educational program in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium on April 4.

The program was sponsored jointly by PEN/Faulkner Writers in Schools and the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Most of the more than 200 students were from Cardozo High School and IDEA Public Charter School.

Prior to the event, PEN/Faulkner Writers in Schools had provided the students with free copies of the authors' books and worked with teachers to help prepare students for the event, which was filmed by C-SPAN's "Book TV" for later broadcast.

Tabitha King, who at one time worked as a library assistant and thought she might become a librarian, spoke eloquently about the importance of both fiction and the act of reading. The great pleasure of fiction, she said, is that it enables one to "enter other people's lives" and look at the human condition in a meaningful way. "The only way to [truly] engage is through the imagination," she said

She also told the audience that "there is nothing better a person, especially a parent, can do than to read to a child—it forms a contract for life."

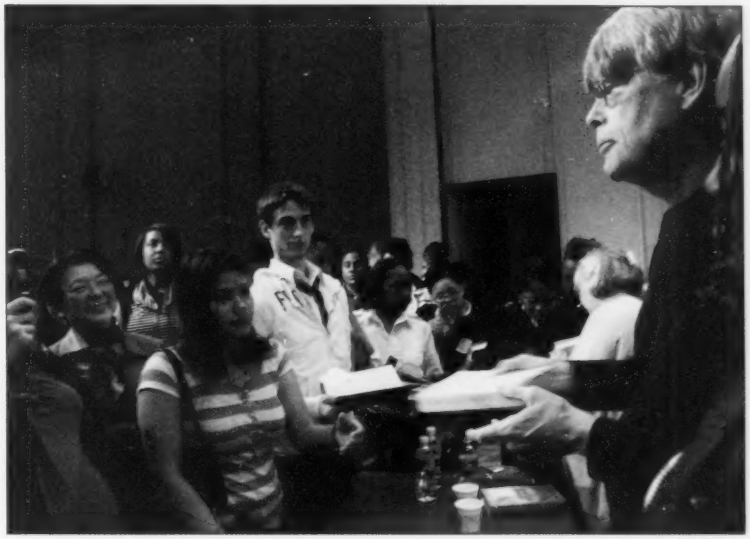
During the question period, Owen King admitted that his parents practiced what they preached with regard to reading. He recalled growing up surrounded by books and found it "natural" to become a writer "because it's fun."

"The readers of the world become the writers of the world," Stephen King observed.

One of the students asked the elder King why his writings "were so gruesome and bloody." He shrugged then suggested that it may that "we are drawn to things inside us."

Since childhood he has been drawn to science fiction and horror stories. One book that was read to him as a child, he noted, was Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

"Reading becomes rewarding the more you do it," King told the students. "If you can read you can walk into a job."



Claire Duggan

Three Kings—fiction writers Stephen, his wife Tabitha and son Owen—each read and signed books at a Coolidge Auditorium gathering of more than 130 students from local high schools on Friday morning, April 4.

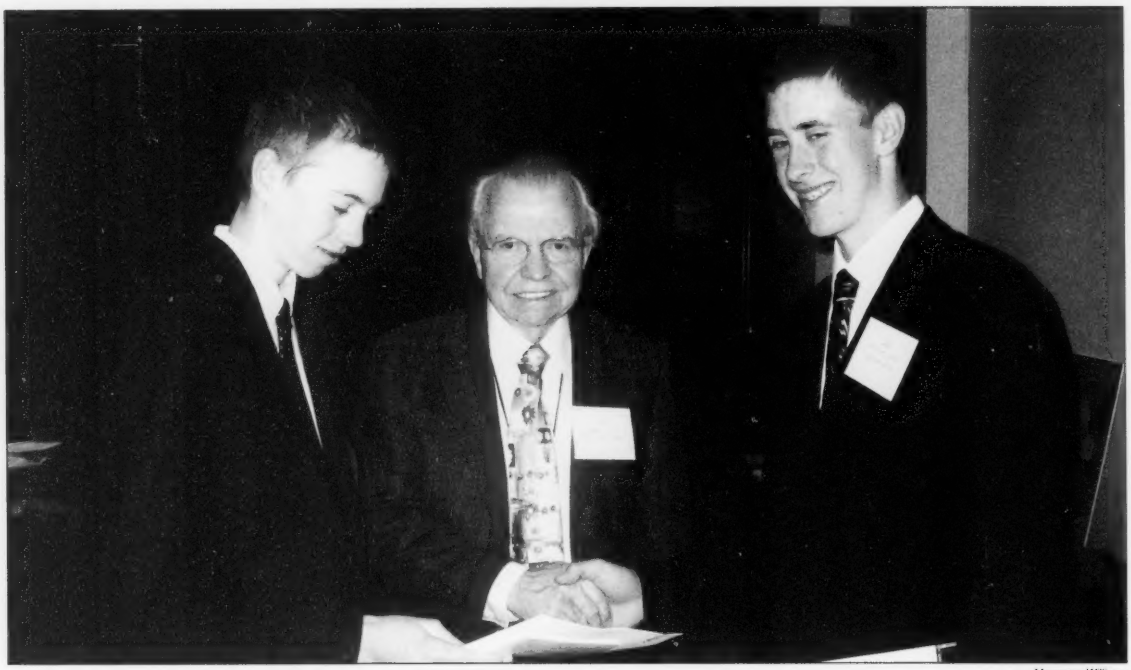
The reading-promotion program brought Stephen King (above) to the Library for his first visit. The Library's Center for the Book sponsored the event with one of its reading-promotion partners, the PEN/Faulkner Writers in the Schools program. Right, the Kings pose for a picture in the Coolidge Auditorium during their first reading together.

Claire Duggan

PEN/Faulkner Writers in Schools is a national literary outreach program dedicated to developing the next generation of readers. Since 1989, the program has brought nationally-known writers into urban public high schools.

Its parent organization, the PEN/Faulkner Foundation, was founded by writers in 1980, and named for novelist William Faulkner, who used his Nobel Prize funds to create an award for young writers, and PEN, the international writers' organization. The PEN/Faulkner Foundation, which brings together American writers and readers in a wide variety of programs to promote a love of literature, is one the Center for the Book's reading promotion partners. For more information, visit **www.penfaulkner.org**. ◆

John Y. Cole is director of the Center for the Book.



Maurvene Williams

Brothers Brady (left) and Kyle Baldwin (right), founders of My Own Book, a book donation program for children, meet John Cole, director of the Center for the Book.

News from the Center for the Book

Reading-Promotion Partners Share Ideas at Meeting

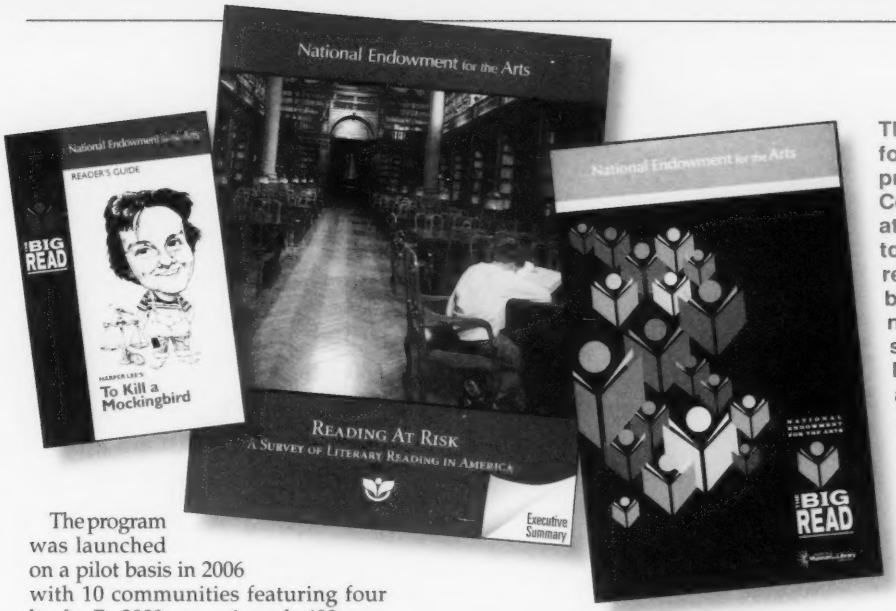
In mid-March, representatives from more than 40 of the Center for the Book's reading-promotion partners gathered to display their materials, share resources, exchange ideas and report on their programs to promote reading and literacy. Established in 1987, the partnership program's mission is to share information and join forces in promoting books, literacy, reading and libraries.

"Our partnership program recognizes that reading promotion in the U.S. is primarily a nonprofit, nongovernmental activity; indeed in a democracy, it is citizen responsibility," said John Y. Cole, director of the Center for the Book. "This network has grown enormously since 1987, when the center launched "The Year of the Reader," the first of our national reading-promotion campaigns. It now includes more than 80 nonprofit organizations, as well as several government agencies."

New partners participating in the meeting were Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas, an organization that matches children age 7 through 14 with mentors; Romance Writers of America, which promotes the genre; and School Biz Match, which encourages private companies, government, community and nonprofit organizations to support public or private schools on the local, state or national level. Potential reading-promotion partners represented at the meeting were the Mercantile Library Center for Fiction, My Own Book and Read it LOUD! Foundation.

Barbara Conaty, an information resource officer in the Department of State and a special guest at the meeting, brought two projects to the attention of the group, suggesting that they might also be of interest to the center's network of affiliated state centers. Sister Libraries is an initiative of the American Library Association that encourages U.S. libraries to form partnerships with libraries in other countries. The American Corners program is a State Department-sponsored initiative inaugurated worldwide to make information about the U.S. in a variety of formats available to foreign publics at large. Nearly 400 American Corners operate in more than 60 countries throughout the world.

David Kipen of the National Endowment for the Arts, the sponsor of "The Big Read" project, briefly described this innovative reading-promotion program that encourages citizens to read and discuss a single book within their communities.



The National Endowment for the Arts, a reading-promotion partner of the Center for the Book, created the Big Read project to encourage citizens to read and discuss a single book within their communities. Among the titles suggested are "To Kill a Mockingbird." The NEA also conducts surveys about the state of reading in America, such as "Reading at Risk" (www.arts.gov/pub/readingatrisk.pdf)

The program was launched on a pilot basis in 2006 with 10 communities featuring four books. By 2009 approximately 400 communities in the U.S. will have hosted a Big Read since the program's inception. Kipen acknowledged its partner, the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), for its significant financial support of the program.

Other supporters include the Center for the Book, the American Booksellers Association, the Association of American Publishers, the Children's Book Council, the Church and Synagogue Library Association, Friends of Libraries USA, the Junior League of Washington, the Mercantile Library Center for Fiction and the Phi Beta Phi Fraternity.

Cole also noted a number of events that the Center for the Book had sponsored jointly with its reading-promotion partners in recent years. In 2006, the Center for the Book hosted an event that featured First Lady Laura Bush, honorary chair of "The Big Read." Since then, "Big Read" projects have been sponsored by state centers for the book or their institutional hosts in Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Virginia and Wyoming.

In 2007, the Center for the Book sponsored a talk by mystery writer Sara Paretsky with the Mystery Writers of America; a literacy awards ceremony with the National Coalition for Literacy; an anniversary program with the National Literary Society for the Deaf; a book talk by cultural anthropologist Richard Kurin with the Smithsonian Institution Libraries; a program on the state of the book industry with the Book Industry Study Group; and announced the appointment of the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, a major two-year partnership project cosponsored with the Children's Book Council.

Cole also thanked a number of partners for their support of the Library's annual National Book Festival. These included the Junior League of Washington, which provides approximately 400 volunteers for the event and the National Basketball Association/Women's National Basketball Association, which features its "Read to Achieve" program in the Children's Pavilion.

Cole also acknowledged three partners that made substantial financial contributions to the 2007 National Book Festival: the National Endowment for the Arts, which sponsored the Poetry Pavilion; IMLS, which sponsored the Pavilion of the States and supported the travel of many of the pavilion representatives from state libraries and state centers for the book; and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which sponsored the participation in the Pavilion of the States by the nine state centers for the book that are hosted by state humanities councils.

For a current list of the Center for the Book's reading-promotion partners, go to **www.loc.gov/cfbook/**. ◆

John Cole

Tom Ruppanner, CEO of the Read it LOUD! Foundation, chats with Robin Adelson, center, executive director of the Children's Book Council and Jane Meyers, president of the Lubuto Library Project.

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